



The Air National Guard's Commitment to Pest Management



Introduction

The Air National Guard Pest Management Program protects our men and women in the United States and in other areas of the world. This program establishes controls and preventive measures to ensure those serving our country are free from diseases contracted through pests. This program also helps our efforts to promote safety for ground operations by keeping animals off runways and flight lines.

People commonly think of flies and mosquitoes as annoying pests—the buzzing sound of a mosquito near our ear; the swatting of flies away from ourselves and any food items; the itchy bite that comes from a mosquito or a fly.

However, the existence of these insects may be more than just an annoyance to our men and women in the Armed Forces. Pests are unwanted plants, animals or microorganisms. They commonly include vertebrates (such as skunks, wild cats, coyotes and deer); invertebrates (such as snakes), insects, birds, algae, poison plants, weeds and microorganisms that attack

wood. These pests affect the ability of the Air National Guard to do its job of protecting the health and safety of our troops worldwide.

Pest management controls unwanted or undesirable pests. Effective pest management includes both chemical and nonchemical means of control. Pest management practices include:

- mechanical means of exclusion, such as the use of mosquito netting or screening openings;
- sanitation and vegetation management of areas that are pest breeding grounds or
- the wearing of appropriate clothing (long-sleeved shirts and long pants).

The Air National Guard wants you to know that:

- Pest management is important.
- A Pest Management Program is an effective, environmentally sensitive solution to ensure health and safety.
- Highly trained and skilled specialists carry out the Pest Management Program.

Why Is Pest Management Important?

Pest management is important for readiness.

The men and women of the Air National Guard can be found throughout the world performing their missions. They often face a variety of pests. Depending on the location, malaria, dengue fever or sandfly fever may cause severe illness, and possibly even death. Other casualties may result from venomous snake bites and poisonous plants. These diseases not only cause great harm, but also incur casualties, severely affecting the readiness of our Air National Guard forces.

Throughout history, pests such as mosquitoes, flies and rodents have

caused more disease-related casualties in military situations than actual combat. As far back as 2,500 years ago, malaria and other diseases weakened combat forces. During World War II, 16 million casualties were recorded; 14 million of those casualties were disease related. During the Vietnam War, 17% of the casualties were due to combat injuries; 83% were from pest-related diseases such as malaria, fevers and respiratory afflictions.

Because pests transmit disease, pest control protects the health, welfare and morale of personnel. Pest control also prevents tremendous financial losses to property, food supplies and vegetation.

What Can Be Done About the Threat to Air National Guard Personnel and Mission Readiness?

A Pest Management Program is an effective, environmentally sensitive solution to ensure safety and health.

The goal of the Air National Guard Pest Management Program is to prevent pests, and the diseases they carry, from adversely affecting its personnel, ground operations and missions. The program establishes and maintains safe, effective and environmentally sound pest management practices. The program integrates several control measures to reduce the impact of pests.

The Air National Guard has an active Pest Management Program. Our Pest Management Program includes six steps.

1. Understanding and Educating the Customer

Most pest control in and around buildings is a service to the occupants and is done at their request. Educating the customer about pest management is essential. The pest controller talks with the customer to understand his or her concerns and expectations.

2. Analyzing the Pest Problem

It is simple to identify most pests and why they are present, but a thorough understanding of structural engineering and design may be needed to learn the source of an infestation.

3. Taking Short-Term Corrective Action

Although the Integrated Pest Management Program emphasizes a preventive maintenance approach to pest problems, the real world often demands immediate corrective action. Often, the use of pesticides for this purpose is unavoidable. Every corrective action will use the method that is the least harmful to the environment and the population.

4. Implementing Long-Term Preventive Action

Ongoing, built-in control actions indirectly reduce pests by reducing their food, nesting areas and access. Pest prevention requires that the pest controller have as thorough a knowledge of building operations as of pest biology.

What Can Be Done About the Threat to Air National Guard Personnel and Mission Readiness?

5. Monitoring, Documenting and Evaluating Results

Department of Defense pest control reporting systems include options for nonchemical control. Accurate record keeping is necessary to document pest management successes.

6. Getting Back to the Customer

Measurement of customer satisfaction is a critical component of the Pest Management Program.

Pest management practices include an extensive pest management education program, preventive pest control and extensive inspection and monitoring for pests.

Other practices include:

- fertilizer application, mowing and the planting of native plants to control weeds;
- improving the sanitation of an area to prevent an appealing environ-

ment for mammals such as rodents and

- using pesticides only when sanitation is inadequate or other pest control measures are ineffective.

Pest management practices rely on regular monitoring to decide if treatments are needed. These treatments keep pest numbers low enough to prevent environmental damage or annoyance. Sound pest management uses fewer pesticides. Using fewer pesticides leads to less risk for the human population.

The Air National Guard uses pesticides only when and where monitoring has shown that the pest will pose a health threat or cause unacceptable economic damage.

Pesticide treatments are chosen and timed to be most effective and least disruptive to natural pest controls. Pesticides with the least chemical toxicity are selected.

Who Manages the Pest Management Program?

Highly trained and skilled specialists carry out the Pest Management Program.

All Air National Guard personnel who apply pesticides on our bases must be certified by the Department of Defense or the state in which they work. The certification process includes:

- An initial certification course;
- an additional formal workshop, offered annually;
- work with pest management personnel for their traditional annual two-week training time and
- recertification during the fourth year.

The Pest Management Specialist must be recertified every three years.

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What Is the Future of the Pest Management Program?

To ensure that a successful Pest Management Program continues, the Department of Defense has initiated measures of merit. These measures of merit contain requirements that must be met by the year 2000.

All defense installations will:

- Develop pest management plans. (These plans are prepared, reviewed and updated each year by pest management professionals.)
- Reduce the use of pesticides. (Indiscriminate, unnecessary pesticide use must be avoided.)
- Certify the pest management applicators. (Personnel responsible for applying pesticides will be properly certified within two years of employment.)

For more information about the Air National Guard's Pest Management Program and the responsibilities of our Pest Management Specialists, please contact:

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